

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-14

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SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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DRAFTED BY IO:CWMAYNES:OM
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WHITE HOUSE: PBOURNP
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 264102

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, PLAB, ILO

SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ILO: CONVERSATION WITH ILO
DIRECTOR GENERAL BLANCHARD

1. WHITE HOUSE ADVISOR PETER BOURNE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES, AND ECOSOC AMBASSADOR WELLS CALLED ON ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL BLANCHARD AT 3:00 P.M. NOVEMBER 1 TO CONVEY TO HIM U.S. DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ILO. BLANCHARD, ALTHOUGH UNDERSTANDABLY UPSET, RECEIVED THE NEWS WITH CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT AND DIGNITY. HE SAID HE WOULD COOPERATE WITH THE U.S. OUTSIDE OF THE ORGANIZATION IN WHATEVER WAY APPROPRIATE.

2. MAYNES AND BOURNE OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING THIS ADMINISTRATION'S GREAT RELUCTANCE TO TAKE THE DECISION REACHED. IT WAS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT DECISION FOR
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THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE. MAYNES UNDERSCORED THAT THE U.S. APPRECIATED THE CONSIDERABLE CONTRIBUTIONS THE ILO HAD MADE OVER THE YEARS IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR POLICY. HOWEVER, THE JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE IN PARTICULAR HAD BEEN A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE USG AND THE CONFERENCE'S DECISION -- ONLY THE SECOND IN 60 YEARS -- NOT TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS HAD BEEN AN ESPECIALLY DEVASTATING BLOW. MAYNES STATED THAT, IN REACHING ITS DECISION, THE USG

WISHED TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE EFFORTS HE PERSONALLY HAD MADE IN RECENT MONTHS TO TRY TO RESOLVE SOME OF THE SENSITIVE ISSUES TROUBLING THE ORGANIZATION.

2. BLANCHARD REPLIED QUIETLY BUT FIRMLY THAT HE BELIEVED THE U.S. WAS MAKING A GREAT MISTAKE. WE WERE LETTING DOWN OUR WESTERN ALLIES, WE WERE ABANDONING AN ORGANIZATION IN WHICH, THE WESTERN COUNTRIES, IN FACT, ENJOYED MORE INFLUENCE THAN IN ANY OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, EXCEPT THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE U.S. DECISION TO WITHDRAW HAD STARTED IN 1954 WHEN THE SOVIET UNION ENTERED. SOME ELEMENTS OF AMERICAN LABOR AND BUSINESS HAVE NEVER RECONCILED THEMSELVES TO THIS DEVELOPMENT.

3. BLANCHARD SAID THAT THE U.S. DECISION WOULD INVOLVE A REDUCTION OF 300 INDIVIDUALS ON THE ILO STAFF. HE WANTED TO PROTECT THE STAFF AS MUCH AS HE COULD AND WOULD TRY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM THROUGH EARLY RETIREMENT. (IN A LATER PRESS INTERVIEW, BLANCHARD SAID PUBLICLY THAT HE WOULD NOT RETALIATE AGAINST THE MORE THAN 900 AMERICANS WORKING IN THE SECRETARIAT.) ACCORDING TO BLANCHARD, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ILO BUDGET WOULD BE REDUCED BY 19.2 PER CENT AS A RESULT OF THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL. HE WAS NOT PROPOSING A FULL 25 PER CENT REDUCTION. IN MAKING THE CUTS, HE WOULD TAKE SPECIAL EFFORTS TO PROTECT MORE VITAL PROGRAMS LIKE WORKERS' EDUCATION AND THE ILO PROGRAM THRUST IN THE FIELD OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS -- "A THRUST NOW FAVORED BY YOUR PRESIDENT." BLANCHARD SAID THAT HE HAS AUTHORITY TO MAKE THESE CUTS WITHOUT RESORTING TO A SPECIAL SESSION PRIOR TO THE REGULAR JUNE 1978 CONFERENCE.

4. BLANCHARD COMMENTED THAT HIS PRINCIPAL REGRET WAS THE WAY HE HAD RECEIVED THE NEWS. HE HAD LEARNED THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION BY BUYING THE NEW YORK TIMES AT 11:00 P.M. MONDAY EVENING. MAYNES ASSURED THE DG THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT INTENDED THIS TO HAPPEN AND THAT MAYNES HAD ASKED FOR THE MEETING WITH BLANCHARD TO INFORM HIM PRIOR TO RELEASE OF THE NEWS BY THE WHITE HOUSE.

5. MAYNES NOTED THAT SECRETARY MARSHALL'S STATEMENT MENTIONED THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE WILLING TO RETURN TO THE ILO PROVIDED CERTAIN ACTIONS WERE TAKEN AND THAT THE U.S. INTENDED TO FOLLOW ILO EVENTS CAREFULLY. MAYNES ASKED

BLANCHARD IN THIS CONNECTION FOR HIS ADVICE ON VARIOUS OPTIONS OPEN TO THE U.S. REGARDING ANY FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE USG AND THE ILO IN THE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES. BLANCHARD SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THIS QUESTION AND RETURN TO US.

6. MAYNES NOTED THAT SOME DELEGATIONS HAVE SPOKEN OF A SPECIAL SESSION TO ADDRESS THE REPORT WHICH WAS NOT ADOPTED BY THE JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE. BLANCHARD COMMENTED THAT NOTHING WAS IMPOSSIBLE. HE WAS NOT AGAINST A SPECIAL SESSION IN PRINCIPLE. BUT IT WAS EXTREMELY CONFRONTATIONAL AND MIGHT NOT PRODUCE THE RESULTS THAT THOSE WHO SUPPORT IT WOULD HOPE TO SEE. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD EXPLORE DEVELOPMENTS IN GENEVA ON THIS ISSUE AND REPORT BACK TO US. CONFIDENTIAL

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7. BLANCHARD CLOSED THE MEETING BY ASKING THAT MAYNES CONVEY TO SECRETARY VANCE HIS RESPECT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE VERY UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHETIC RECEPTION WHICH THE SECRETARY HAD GIVEN HIM SOME WEEKS AGO. BLANCHARD SAID THAT HE REGARDED THAT MEETING AS A GENUINE EFFORT BY THE UNITED STATES TO ENGAGE IN REAL COMMUNICATION WITH HIM ABOUT THE PROBLEMS HIS ORGANIZATION FACED. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF SHOULD HAVE ALLOWED HIM AS THE SENIOR ILO OFFICIAL TO MAKE THE CASE BEFORE THIS DECISION WAS TAKEN BECAUSE IT WILL HAVE SUCH MAJOR CONSEQUENCES FOR THE UN SYSTEM AND FOR THE U.S. IMAGE IN THE WORLD, BUT HE DID UNDERSTAND THE OTHER DEMANDS ON THE PRESIDENT'S TIME. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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